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13 April 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Training

SUBJECT : Report of the Management Task Force

1. The Management Task Force, formed 15 January at the request of the Director of Training and staffed through the cooperation of the 4 Deputy Directors, has completed its task. It has surveyed the opinions of middle managers on their training needs and in paragraph 4 presents its recommendations.

2. The Task Force proceeded on the following bases:

a. Officers at the GS 13-15 level who are supervisors of supervisors would be the main focus of the survey. Supergrades would be included but only as necessary to complete the survey of a Directorate. The level of the job, not the grade, determines who is a middle manager.

b. A single "course" was not a necessary outcome of the survey.

3. The Task Force surveyed opinion by questionnaire and by personal interview. A total of 320 questionnaires were sent out and 250, or 75%, were returned. Sixty-three interviews were conducted. The data obtained yields the following:

a. The middle manager as polled in the survey averages 48 years, GS 14-15+, and 20 years of service in the Agency. The exception is in the Directorate for Science and Technology where middle managers have fewer years of age and of service. A significant portion of the sample is looking toward retirement in the 1970's.

Handwritten notes:
1. 48 years
2. GS 14-15+
3. 20 years
4. Exception in Directorate for Science and Technology
5. Looking toward retirement in the 1970's



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b. Each Directorate has distinct functions, and middle managers have career identification with these functions. They are partial managers--operators, analysts, scientific specialists, and support specialists who have some managerial responsibilities.

c. Nevertheless, the Task Force found more uniformity of attitudes toward training than anticipated. Middle managers have a positive view of the value of training. They tend to believe, however, that many of the learnable elements of management are not necessarily directly teachable. They feel that the effectiveness of training is heavily dependent upon the managerial environment, including early identification of officers with managerial potential. They don't believe that simply throwing a training course at a management problem will make that problem go away.

d. The respondents generally desire some training, particularly if they are given more responsible positions, and believe their successors need more training than they do. Some expressed regret that they had not had more opportunity for training. Many see virtue in small seminars and in forums for discussion of problems common within Directorates and for improving peer relationships across Directorates. In any case, courses should be intense and practical.

4. The Task Force recommends:

a. That the Office of Training establish a training program for middle managers.

(1) The program should be designed to familiarize the students with the various approaches to management, such as human relations, management science, and functional management. There should be emphasis on Management by Objective.

(2) The program should examine practices currently employed in the Agency and explore ways to improve these practices. Agency executives should be called upon to explain what they expect of middle managers.

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(3) Where possible, case studies used in the program should be based on Agency problems rather than business and industrial experience. Each Directorate should be requested to contribute useful case studies and speakers willing to speak from their own experiences.

(4) In view of the varied needs of Directorates and of individual managers, consideration should be given to a format segmented in time. The main course or core segment should be designed to meet the common needs of new middle managers. Seminars, forums, and briefing sessions could be added as needed to the program to meet the special needs of other middle managers and graduates of the core segment. Subjects addressed could include mental health, alcoholism, drug addiction, and the new generation. The purpose of the segmented format is to provide as much flexibility as possible in terms of time and type of student attendance.

(5) A time period in the core segment should be used to familiarize the middle manager with management training available within and without the Agency. According to the survey, he does not always know what training is available.

(6) The attached Directorate reports give details on the varied training needs of middle managers. For instance, respondents to the questionnaire tended to want the management science approach for themselves and the human relations approach for their successors. All managers have an interest in career development and in learning more about computer applications, but opinion is divided on budgeting and records management.

b. That the Office of Training work out with the Directorates a procedure for selecting students for this training program.

(1) The selection procedure should insure that the individual middle manager receives management training at the appropriate time(s) in his career. The respondents to the questionnaire indicate that the most appropriate time is when the individual is about to assume or has just assumed middle management responsibility.

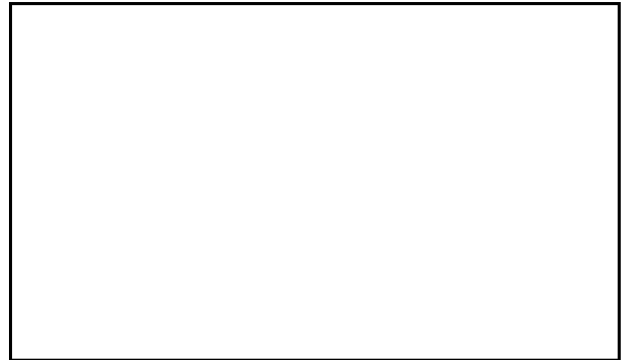
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(2) If this procedure is successful, the program can avoid the fate of the now defunct Advanced Management (Planning) course. This course was cancelled because too few could attend, not because too few wanted to attend. According to the questionnaire, there is still a demand for this course. The program should also avoid the opposite fate--surviving as a place to park the marginal and those between assignments.

5. To the extent that the program gains the active support of Agency executives in the selection of students and the articulation of managerial philosophy, it can be successful in contributing to the improvement of Agency management as a whole.

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Attachments:

- Individual Directorate Reports (4)
- Questionnaire for Middle Managers (1)

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